

The background of the slide is a light gray gradient with several realistic water droplets of various sizes scattered across it. The droplets have highlights and shadows, giving them a three-dimensional appearance. The text is centered in the middle of the slide.

NC CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP TRAINING: CHURCH COUNCIL

DONNA BANKS

JEREMIAH 29:11

I know the plans I have in mind for you.

declares the LORD: they are plans for peace.

not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL?

The church council plays a central role in the life of a local church or charge, guiding its mission and ministry.

According to the UMC Book of Discipline 2024 ¶ 252,

- The church council is responsible for planning and implementing a program of nurture, outreach, witness, and resources.
- It also manages the administration of the church's organizational and temporal life.
- The council is tasked with envisioning, planning, implementing, and annually evaluating the church's mission and ministry.
- In its role as the administrative agency of the charge conference, it ensures that all aspects of the church's work are aligned with its larger vision.

Source: Guidelines Church Council 2025-2028 (Cokesbury 2024)

WHO SHOULD SERVE ON THE CHURCH COUNCIL?

The lay leader

The church treasurer

Lay delegates to the annual conference

A representative from the pastor-parish committee

A representative from the board of trustees

A representative from the finance committee

A young adult representative

A representative from the United Methodist Youth

A representative from the United Women in Faith group

A representative from the United Methodist Men group

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND



Additionally, the senior pastor or another appointed clergy person along with staff persons will attend council meetings.



When selecting council members, it's important to ensure diversity, representing the full range of ages, genders, and races within the congregation.



Vital programs and ministries also should be well-represented. If your church offers multiple worship services, include regular participants from each service on the committee.




Look for natural and potential leaders within the congregation who view membership on the council as an opportunity for growth and meaningful contribution.



Members should be committed to the church's vision and familiar with the church's overall programming, not just their specific areas of involvement.

HOW OFTEN DOES THE CHURCH COUNCIL MEET, AND HOW LONG DO PEOPLE SERVE?

The church council must meet at least four times per year, though additional meetings may be called as needed by the chairperson or pastor.



Most members serve a standard three-year term, though they may serve additional terms if reappointed by the nomination and leadership development committee. The term of office for new members begins after charge conference.

EXPECTATIONS FOR CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS

They are considered Leaders in the congregation

Called through charge conference to serve the church in this important way

Invited to help lead and love others in the mission to repair the world

Dedicated to servant leadership through discipleship

TWO DIMENSIONS OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

- WORK WELL WITH PEOPLE OF ALL AGES, ABILITIES
- COMMUNICATION SKILL—LISTENING
- COMMUNICATION SKILL—SPEAKING AND MAKING PRESENTATION
- ABILITY TO VISION
- ABILITY TO RECRUIT OTHERS AND DELEGATE TASKS
- ABILITY TO PLAN AND LEAD A MEETING, PROJECT, OR EVENT
- ABILITY TO LEAD, TEACH OTHERS IN SPIRITUAL GROWTH
- ABILITY TO COMPLETE A TASK (FOLLOW THROUGH)

SPIRITUAL LIFE

- PERSONAL PRAYER LIFE
- BIBLE READING FOR STUDY AND DEVOTION
- PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC WORSHIP
- FREQUENT COMMUNION
- SERVICE TO OTHERS
- BALANCE OF LOVING GOD AND LOVING PEOPLE
- EXHIBIT FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT: LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GENEROSITY, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, AND SELF-CONTROL (SEE GAL 5:22-23)
- FASTING OR ABSTINENCE (NOT NECESSARILY FOOD)

HABAKKUK 2:2-3

*Write the vision: make it plain on tablets,
so that a runner may read it.*

*For there is still a vision for the appointed time:
it speaks of the end and does not lie.
If it seems to tarry, wait for it:
it will surely come: it will not delay.*

WHAT DOES THE CHURCH COUNCIL DO?



Envision and plan

hold a broad view or “big picture” of the future of the congregation by focusing on the mission and vision of the church.

It must see the big picture rather than micro-manage.



implementation

Hold an administration and management role ongoing life of the congregation.

oversees and coordinates ministry among several groups, including Trustees, Finance Committee, discipleship groups, outreach efforts, Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations, Nominations, and others.



Evaluate constantly seeking ways to be more effective

looking for better ways to connect with God’s mission in the world.

the effectiveness of resource components, leaders, the number of people being served, and how Christian disciples are being developed.

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SINGLE ACCOUNTABLE LEADERSHIP MODEL

MISSION POSSIBLE BY KAY KOTAN AND BLAKE BRADFORD

ISSUES

- OUR MISSION IS NO LONGER OUR FOCUS
- THE CURRENT CHURCH STRUCTURE IS DRIVING MISSION RATHER THAN THE MISSION DRIVING THE STRUCTURE.
- WE'VE MADE MEETINGS OUR MISSION
- FEWER CONGREGANTS WILLING TO SERVE OF "COMMITTEES"
- THERE IS A LACK OF TRUST, FEAR CHANGE, AND A THREAT TO POWER

MOTIVATING FACTORS

- EFFICIENCY—DECISIONS MUST BE RUN THROUGH MULTIPLE COMMITTEES, WHICH CAN TAKE SEVERAL MONTHS.
- ALIGNMENT—CHURCHES ARE WORKING IN SILOS WHERE ONE COMMITTEE HAS NO IDEA WHAT THE OTHER IS DOING.
- MISSIONAL FOCUS—THAT MOVES THE CHURCH FROM AN INTERNAL FOCUS TO AN EXTERNAL FOCUS
- ACCOUNTABILITY—RECLAIMING THE MISSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY FOR FRUITFULNESS

ACCOUNTABLE LEADERSHIP

- MARRIES RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY WITH ACCOUNTABILITY
- PROMOTES UNITY
- FUNCTIONS ON A HIGH LEVEL OF TRUST
- DECISIONS ARE MADE QUICKLY
- MISSION/VISION IS THE DRIVING FORCE
- GOALS/OBJECTIVE OF MINISTRIES ARE ADJUSTED AS NEEDED

STEPS TO CONSIDER

- DETERMINE YOUR WHY? FIGURE YOUR PURPOSE FOR MAKING A STRUCTURAL CHANGE THAT GOES BEYOND SIMPLY HAVING FEWER MEETINGS.
- ENTER INTO A PERIOD OF DISCERNMENT AND PRAYER
- DO YOUR HOMEWORK! UTILIZE BOOKS AND CONFERENCE RESOURCES TO HELP WITH DISCERNMENT PROCESS
- COMMUNICATE! COMMUNICATE! COMMUNICATE!--LEAD CONGREGATIONAL CONVERSATIONS ON WHY, WHAT, AND HOW.
- MANAGE WHAT PEOPLE OR LOSING

ROLE CLARIFICATION

- BOARD/COUNCIL/TEAM SHIFT TO A ROLE OF GOVERNANCE (FIDUCIARY, GENERATIVE, AND STRATEGY)
- PASTOR—SHIFT TO LEADING THE PEOPLE INTO THE MISSION FIELD BY COMMUNICATING GOD’S MISSION AND VISION
- STAFF (PAID OR UNPAID) SHIFT TO MANAGING THE DAY-TO-DAY MINISTRY
- MEMBERS SHIFT TO MINISTERING TO THE CHURCH, THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND THE LARGER WORLD.

MAKING
ACCOUNTABILITY
SIMPLE



STRUCTURE

- REALIZE YOUR COMMITTEES STILL EXIST, BUT ALL ARE COMBINED IN NEW LEADERSHIP MODEL
- YOU NEED 9-13 MEMBERS—THE STANDARD SIZE OF COMMITTEES BY BOD.
- STILL NEED CLASSES BUT NOT ELECTING AS MANY MEMBERS IN EACH CLASS
- KEEP NOMINATION TEAM SEPARATE



MINISTRY TEAMS

- MOBILIZATION IS THE WORK OF MINISTRY TEAMS
- LED BY STAFF OR VOLUNTEER (PAID OR UNPAID)
- MEMBERS OF MINISTRY TEAMS ARE NOT ELECTED, BUT ARE SELECTED BASED ON THEIR GIFTS AND PASSION FOR A PARTICULAR AREA OF MINISTRY.
- MINISTRY TEAMS CAN BE SHORT-TERM OR LONG-TERM, OR AS LONG AS A PARTICULAR PROJECT LAST
- THESE TEAMS: UWF, UMM, WORSHIP, PRAYER, MISSIONS, ETC.

RESULTS

- RENEWED HEALTHINESS IN THE LEADERS
- CHANGE IS THE NATURE AND CONTENT OF THE CONVERSATION
- HOPE IS REBORN WITHIN THE LIFE OF THE CONVERSATION
- MISSIONAL FOCUS UNIFIES THE CONGREGATION
- THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS ADAPTIVE CHALLENGES—THE COMPLEX PROBLEMS THAT SHIFT VALUES, BELIEFS, ATTITUDES AND/OR BEHAVIORS